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**To:** Instructional Quality Commission  
c/o Thomas Adams, Executive Director  
1430 N Street, Suite 3207  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: Sikh Portion of the History-Social Science Framework Field Review Draft of 2014**

We have noted the on-going discussion of the Sikh portion of the draft narrative and studied the various suggestions made to date by concerned parties. We acknowledge and appreciate that it has mainly been the Sikhs who pressed for the Framework narrative revision process now underway, which will be of benefit to many communities.

We present below some suggestions and observations on a few of these issues, including the advent of Islam within India. We endorse an accurate and authentic presentation of Sikhism while at the same time avoiding maligning Hinduism in a manner that constitutes adverse reflection as defined in the state education code.

Sincerely,

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Managing Editor  
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## Uberoi Foundation Institute for Curriculum Advancement

Comments of July 1, 2015

### 1. Chapter 4, Grade 7, lines 1275 to 1278:

*Original: "Muslim civilization became notably cosmopolitan, as merchants and scholars founded new communities and won converts from sub-Saharan Africa and east to the Indian subcontinent to Southeast Asia. Conversion slowed in India with the emergence of Sikhism in 1469."*

**Uberoi edit 1-A:** Place before last sentence: "Islam mainly spread through the Indian subcontinent following its military conquests and Muslim rule."

EXPLANATION: This characterization of the spread of Islam is incorrect: "...merchants and scholars ... won converts from sub-Saharan Africa and east to the Indian subcontinent to Southeast Asia." It might be largely true in the case of Southeast Asia, but is historically wrong for the Indian subcontinent. The time frame of 1000 ce to 1750 witnessed centuries of warfare that included huge and indiscriminate slaughter of Hindus which arguably constitute one of the greatest genocides in history. Sikhism itself was founded in part to counter this religious jihad, and the Sikhs themselves suffered mightily under Muslim oppression. Content Standard 7.2.4 specifically states "Discuss the expansion of Muslim rule **through military conquests**," yet that standard is ignored here. Therefore, only a partial presentation is being given of how Islam spread through the Indian subcontinent as well as Southeast Asia.

**Uberoi edit 1-B:** Replace the last sentence with: "Conversion eventually slowed in India as a result of the pan-India spread of the Hindu Bhakti movement (including the role of the Nath saints) and, in 1499, the rise of Sikhism in the Punjab."

EXPLANATION: Though forcible conversions were still prevalent during the Mughal era, they slowed due to multiple factors, including the Hindu Bhakti movement, the Nath saints and the emergence of Sikhism. It would therefore be more accurate to provide greater historical context by noting these other crucial factors in addition to the emergence of Sikhism in 1499.

### 2. Chapter 4, Grade 7, lines 1690 to 1701:

*Original: "Religious enthusiasm and challenge to orthodoxy in the early modern period was not unique to Europe. In South Asia Sikhism arose as a new religion founded by Guru Nanak, a social reformer who challenged the authority of the Brahmin and the power of the Mughal empire. Students may learn about the Sikh Scripture (Guru Granth Sahib), articles of faith, turban, and Sikh history. The three basic principles of Sikhism are honest living, sharing with the needy, and praying to the same and one God. In Iran, the Safavid Dynasty gave support to the Shi'a branch of Islam, challenging Sunni authority. On a global scale, religious change in the early modern period tended to promote more personal forms of practice at the expense of the power of entrenched religious institutions and clerics. Students can create a chart, map, or time line representing the establishment and distribution of major world religions."*

**Uberoi edit 2-A:** Add after first sentence: "In India, the Bhakti movement within Hinduism began in the 6th century ce. It placed emphasis on social and religious equality and a personal expression of devotion to God in the popular, instead of classical, languages. It spread rapidly, thanks to the saints such as Meera Bai and Ramananda, among others."

**EXPLANATION:** New religious movements and the rise of new teachers who placed emphasis on God and social non-discrimination--such as in the Nirguni saintly tradition--have been a distinct feature of the entire Indian history. Our suggested modifications will take care of this issue.

**Uberoi edit 2-B:** Replace second sentence of original with: **“In India, Sikhism arose as a new religion founded by Guru Nanak, a social reformer who stressed the personal worship of God, the equality of all people and challenged the power of the Mughal empire.”**

**EXPLANATION:** We do not want to take issue with how Sikhism is described. However, we do want to point out the second sentence as it stands violates the provisions against “adverse reflection” in the state-mandated Social Content Standards on Religion. They state: “1. Adverse reflection. No religious belief or practice may be held up to ridicule and no religious group may be portrayed as inferior.” The statement, “challenged the authority of the Brahmin,” is an explicit attack on the Hindu faith. It is as well historically questionable.

**Uberoi Edit 2-C:** For the sentence beginning “On a global scale:” **“On a global scale, religious change in the early modern period tended to promote more personal forms of practice. In Europe and the Middle East, this was often at the expense of the power of entrenched religious institutions and clerics.”**

**EXPLANATION:** This negative impression is further reinforced by the general statement toward the end of this same paragraph, “...religious change in the early modern period tended to promote more personal forms of practice at the expense of the power of entrenched religious institutions and clerics.” While this may have been the case in Europe, India did not have “entrenched religious institutions and clerics.” (See, for example, Yelle, Robert, *The Language of Disenchantment: Protestant Literalism and Colonial Discourse in British India*, 2013, or Gelders, Raf, and Willem Derde, “Mantras of Anti-Brahmanism: Colonial Experience of Indian Intellectuals,” in the *Economic and Political Weekly* 38.43 (2003): 4611–17.) This is an Orientalist projection of European developments upon Indian history.

### **3. Chapter 5, Grade 10, lines 324 to 326:**

*Original: “Sikhism – Articles of faith, wearing of the turban, Guru Nanak Dev, strict monotheism, brotherhood and equality of humanity, rejection of idol worship and the caste system, the Sri Guru Granth, and the Dasam Granth.”*

**Uberoi edit 3:** Replace with: **“Sikhism – Articles of faith, wearing of the turban, Guru Nanak Dev, strict monotheism, brotherhood and social equality of humanity, personal worship of God and the Sri Guru Granth.”**

**EXPLANATION:** The statement, “rejection of idol worship and the caste system” is adverse reflection, as both are negative and biased Orientalist characterizations of the Hindu faith and society and irrelevant to the presentation of Sikhism. We would recommend to drop both “idol worship” and “caste system.” The text already says “equality of humanity,” so there is no gain in the direct criticism of Hinduism by mentioning the caste system. Adding “social” before “equality” achieves the desired emphasis. For “rejection of idol worship,” a positive term such as “personal worship of God” or “personal approach to God” could be used.